



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

raising money to
grant-aid historic
churches and
chapels in
Nottinghamshire

Newsletter Issue 5: Autumn/Winter 2016

Chairman's Welcome

As Chairman, it has been my pleasure to once again report to the Annual General Meeting of the Trust, which usually takes place at around the same time as the Ride+Stride. This event, organised by each of the English County Trusts supporting historic churches, raises funds which are shared between participating churches and the County Trust involved. This year in Nottinghamshire it was a grey and dispiriting morning, but we know that there will be many brave riders and striders who will be collecting in their sponsor money as I write. We are immensely grateful to them and to the people who, on the day, provide a warm welcome at the participating churches. The event is a distillation of what the Trust is about, engaging as wide a group as possible to help raise funds to maintain the heritage of our historic churches. Additional funds are raised from other trusts, charitable organisations, and voluntary donations. Legacies form an important part of the financing of many trusts and charities, and the NHCT is always grateful to be remembered in a Will.



Social media is an important part of marketing in today's digital work – the Trust has a website, Facebook page, and is looking to develop its “Tweets” on Twitter. If you would like to find out more about NHCT, then follow us on our Facebook “Nottinghamshire Historic Churches Trust” page. We plan to develop our “digital presence” online over the next year, and we are searching for someone to join us to make progress with our social media image, and also to help us move forward to align ourselves with the musical life of the County, which we feel would appeal to our core supporters. There is so much more we could do, but we need more active support. If you know of anybody who has the ability and the time to actively help, please do get in touch.

I commend this fifth edition of the Trust's Newsletter, and hope that when you have read it you might pass it on to someone who doesn't yet know about us. Our historic churches are the beacons of our history, in many cases the only buildings still standing that inform our knowledge of what went before. We must treasure them.

Richard Brackenbury - *NHCT Chairman*

Annual Summer Party at Carlton Hall



Friends of the Trust enjoying the Summer party

The Trust's annual Summer Party was held at Carlton Hall, Carlton-on-Trent, in June when about 80 people enjoyed a warm and dry evening at the invitation of the Vere-Laurie family. We were able to be in the beautiful garden with its massive centrepiece Cedar of Lebanon, and drinks and delicious sandwiches and little strawberry tartlets were eagerly consumed. The buzz of conversation and happy chat continued until we moved to the adjacent St Mary's church, once a chapel-of-ease, before becoming a parish in its own right at the end of the 19th century. Here the Lord Cormack, long serving parliamentarian, journalist and author, talked about some of his favourite churches and pondered on the joys of visiting places of worship, evidently something his audience entirely related to! The Chairman thanked everyone for their wonderful support for the work of the Trust, which continues to honour its founding brief of helping churches in Nottinghamshire to be kept in repair.

NHCT Grant Aided Restoration Projects

Worksop Priory

The Augustinian Priory of St Mary and St Cuthbert was founded some time after 1119. It was once one of the largest Augustinian monasteries in the East Midlands. In 1291 it was the third wealthiest monastic house in Nottinghamshire.

The imposing gatehouse served as the main entrance to the priory complex. Here weary medieval travellers were received and provided with free shelter and food. The gatehouse largely dates from the early 14th century and retains intricate stone detailing. A south elevation porch, containing a shrine to St Mary, was added shortly after. The entrance on each side allowed for pilgrims to enter by one door. After kneeling and praying, they left by the other.

The nave of the present church and the gatehouse survived Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. Little else of the monastic complex can be seen today. It was used as a school until the 1970s, serving generations of Worksop schoolchildren. In more recent years, the gatehouse has seen occasional use, including as an art gallery, and a base for local voluntary service. However, it has also suffered from vandalism and crime.



*Worksop Priory Gatehouse
(Photograph - Geoff Buxton)*

The nave of the present church and the gatehouse and cloister wall were added to the Buildings at Risk Register in 1998. There was an urgent need for repair works to the roof of the shrine. The condition of the remaining statues was a great concern. Water coming in through roofs was damaging the fine vaulted ceiling and decoration below. Masonry repairs were also needed.

The Worksop Priory and Gatehouse Community Trust (WPGCT) secured funding from Historic England, Notts County Council, and the Thoresby Charitable Foundation. The Nottinghamshire Historic Churches Trust gave a further grant of £5,000 for "Repairs and conservation of internal and external carved stonework including vaulting. Repairs to roof of porch to deal with penetrating water ingress. Improvements to chapel to facilitate better use for worship."

Repair works began late in October 2015; the works comprised of repairs and maintenance to the internal and external fabric of the Gatehouse Shrine Chapel including the roof, parapets, re-pointing and stonework and was completed in May 2016. The restoration of the Worksop Priory Gatehouse Shrine offers an opportunity to create renewal in this part of town.

10TH September 2016

Ride+Stride in Nottinghamshire



The second Saturday of September sees thousands of riders and striders setting forth across the country to raise money towards the repair of our church buildings. Nottinghamshire is no exception with 220 churches taking part this year, an increase of 11 from last year.

We have been very fortunate with the weather over the past few years. However this year it was going to be different! In fact after only 300 metres our group of four keen cyclists from Chilwell were well watered but our enthusiasm was not dampened. Having just left St Michael and All Angels Bramcote, we mistakenly announced that the weather had improved, only to find that the rain came heavier than ever and accompanied us to West Bridgford.

We were greeted with a warm welcome and some fantastic bacon baps and cakes at West Bridgford Methodist Church, before carrying on into the centre of Nottingham and visiting St Mary's Church and St Barnabas Cathedral.



Graeme and fellow bike riders undaunted by the weather

Our day continued to Wollaton, Strelley, Cossall and Trowell and by 4pm one of our number required the use of sunshades – a magic end to the day!

We managed to visit 20 churches during the day over 32 miles and far from losing weight, we were at risk at putting on the kilos from some fantastic cakes and refreshments! Immense credit is due to those who made the cakes and welcomed in visitors, especially from a number of new churches who had opened their doors for the first time this year to the participants of the Ride+Stride.

It was great to know that this scene was being witnessed throughout Nottinghamshire. If you have not been involved before, why don't you find out more and join in next year's event to take place on Saturday 9th September.

Finally, a huge thank you to Keith Goodman for organising a very successful event all for all who took part along the way.

Graeme Renton - *Chair of the Grants Committee*

Friends' Visit Sibthorpe and Flintham

Historic churches come in all shapes and sizes and display an infinite range of features of interest. The visit to two churches just off the Fosse Way on 16 April was proof of this engaging diversity.

At Sibthorpe what seems an unexceptionable village church offers a surprise - a grand chancel, with alabaster tomb and Easter sepulchre, which recalls the significant college of chantry priests founded in 1335, but now no more. Through the stockade of great yews embracing the churchyard can be seen a handsome, lofty dovecote, isolated among the earthworks of the former great house.

The great house at Flintham is still very much present, not least the spectacular Victorian conservatory which is such a startling neighbour of the church. Like Sibthorpe the abandoned transepts of Flintham church hint at a more distinguished past for the largely 19th century building.

Both churches demonstrate that history stretches into the present century. At Sibthorpe the plain nave has been cleared of pews, some of which line the perimeter to make a satisfactory meeting place, leaving the chancel as an effective space for worship. The altar and sanctuary at Flintham make a striking climax for a village church and the collection of hatchments in the nave has been extended within the last decade by a very rare 21st century example which teems with heraldic and floral imagery by David Rowbotham to commemorate Myles Hildyard, antiquarian and owner of the Flintham estate.



The Edward Burnell monument, Sibthorpe

Michael Jones and Chris Brooke each drew attention to many more features of the two churches, but succinctly enough to allow for exploration, questions and a lavish tea.

Imogen Skirving

1937 - 2016

The Trustees of Nottinghamshire Historic Churches Trust were very sad to hear of the death of Imogen Skirving who was killed by a motor car when walking back to the villa in which she was staying on Minorca.

In mid-1986 John Severn, Chris Brooke, Graham Beaumont and Richard Craven-Smith-Milnes sat down in Imogen's kitchen at Langar Hall to discuss what should be done to help protect Nottinghamshire's historic churches. Imogen was a key player in the setting up and early running of the Trust, which was inspired by the success of the long-running Lincolnshire Historic Churches Trust. John Severn, the architect, was particularly worried about the church at Cotham which was about to be sold as an antique furniture warehouse, or worse, demolished. Persuading the Churches Conservation Trust to take it on was the first success of what became NHCT.

Imogen regularly attended Trustees' meetings in the early days and was also a member of the Anglican Diocesan Advisory Committee. Her knowledge and expertise proved extremely valuable in shaping the Trust that we have today.

At this time Imogen was beginning to take paying guests into her family home at Langar Hall, and this eventually became the now famous Langar Hall Restaurant & Hotel. This meant that she could no longer spare the time to help with the Trust, but without her it is doubtful that it would have got off the ground. We owe her a great debt of gratitude.



Friends of NHCT - Help Support the Work of the Trust

In April the Friends of Nottinghamshire Historic Churches Trust visited the little church at Sibthorpe, where Dr Chris Brooke and Professor Michael Jones probably posed as many questions about the history of this Once-Collegiate site as they had answers. We then moved to Flintham where the church's graveyard was covered in primroses and Flintham Hall gardens were open for us to walk through the bluebells and beech trees, followed by "the best tea yet" (aren't they all?!) in the village hall.

In July we had an unexpectedly beautiful summer day for our visit to the amazing little church at Holme, and to the churches at North and South Collingham. The Friends were delighted to see the Commandment Boards at South Collingham which had just been cleaned and restored with a special grant from the Friends. The churchwarden thanked the Friends for their support, and also produced a wonderful tea to round off a most interesting day.

The autumn visit for the Friends is on 15 October to the churches at Clifton and Bunny.

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